

Opening Welcome to Worship
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When I hear things being described as complex, I often wonder if the word *complex* is really a code word for *delay*. Certainly, there are complex procedures I would never want to see rushed, such as planned major surgery. Yet, survival – even under complex situations – sometimes calls for quick action and a willingness to assume more risk than might be acceptable under different conditions. Delay, in other words, is past its time.

Yesterday, while listening to the pundits discuss the unfolding events in Egypt, one of the non-Egyptian journalists acknowledged that he believed it was time for a change but that any transition to democracy should be slow, cautious, and well-planned so the right people are elected. A thoughtful and impressive Egyptian reporter took the journalist to task. She asked him what gave him the right to define democracy as anything other than the will of the people of Egypt who had been under the current regime for more than three decades. It was theirs, not his or any other's to decide. And it was time...

It reminded me of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the letter he wrote from the Birmingham jail, where he was imprisoned for his non-violent protests. Clergy, reporters, politicians, and others were encouraging him to “slow down, take it easy, and not rock the boat.” Martin, you see, knew it was time, as well.

By the time oppression, marginalization, and violence reaches the level of such protests as the ones we see today in Egypt, or have recently seen in Tunisia, the Sudan, and other places – or the ones that brought forth the Civil Rights Act, or even the ones today seeking inclusion for the LGBT community in our society and churches – we are already in critical condition. There has already been enough pain, suffering, and violence to perform emergency surgery. Complex or not. Delay is past its time.

Too often, too many people pay the price before the changes occur. Too often the most peaceful and loving are the first to experience violence.

Today, as we enter into prayer and open ourselves to the presence of Jesus in our lives, I think it is fair to say that he, too, would agree with Martin's words:

“But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word 'tension.' I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth.” The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

As we approach the Communion Table this morning, living into this world that seems broken – and *is* – in many places, let us embrace the tension that produces growth, growth which will always be best nurtured – even in its tensest of moments – by love.

Come, let us worship God together.